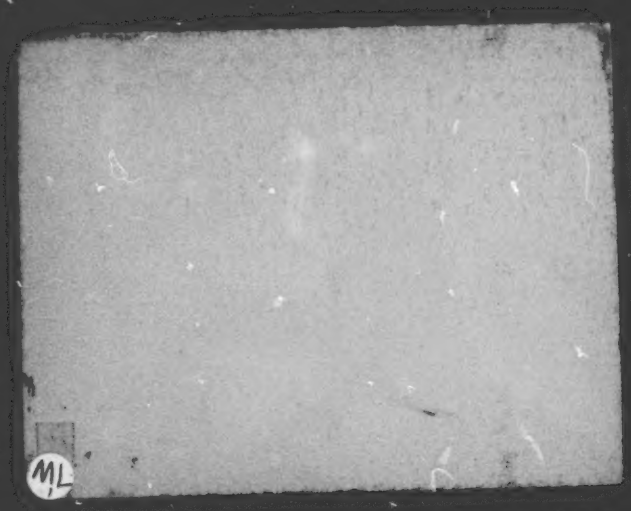

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ABSTRACT

The Victorian Country Education Project (CEP), a pilot project searching for new ways of bringing beneficial educational experiences to disadvantaged rural areas, successfully achieved its aims of establishing community-based programs involving varied groups and people in developing solutions to local educational problems. A central Planning Committee established proposal and evaluation guidelines and a functional structure for the project. Five rural areas selected for the project (Far East Gippsland, King and Ovens Valleys, North Central, Mallee Track, and Western Wimmera) served 15,087 students in 133 schools. Poor introduction of the program into the communities resulted in some animosity and frustration, but local Project Committees made successful needs and resources surveys which increased community awareness and involvement in local educational problem solving. The Project Committees also successfully proposed many programs to the Planning Committee. Among those funded were programs dealing with community surveys, drama, basic literacy/numeracy, sports, special education, music, arts and crafts, transportation, and excursions and field days. General reaction to the project was very positive. Many programs were extended to 1978. Despite early difficulties, CEP took root in the areas, community involvement in education was accepted, and local problem-solving networks were strengthened. (SB)

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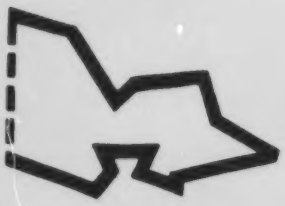
VICTORIAN COUNTRY EDUCATION PROJECT



FIRST PROGRESS REPORT

[1978]

RC 011325

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Section VI.	Some considerations for the Future.

APPENDICES:

I. Proposal and Evaluation Guidelines.

II. The Needs/Resources Survey.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION

This is the first detailed report on the Victorian Country Education Project and while it essentially attempts to trace the development of the project strategy and its implementation, a section has been included on funded programs and early evaluation and reactions. Future reports will pay greater attention to those aspects of the Project.

Given that this is a pilot project which is considering "new ways" of tackling rural disadvantage, the Planning Committee was very concious of the need to produce a "warts and all" report that set out the objectives and what happened in the attempts to achieve those objectives. Furthermore, as this is an innovative project, the Planning Committee felt an obligation to record those developmental processes for those interested groups who may wish to tread similar paths.

In highlighting the "warts" there is always a danger that people will interperet it as failure; on the contrary the Planning Committee wishes to stress that the lessons learnt have been invaluable to future planning. Furthermore future reports will indicate how these problems were resolved.

Finally it must be emphasised that in spite of mistakes, thousands of children and community groups are now involved in developing and/or participating in a great variety of projects. What is more, early indications are that the process of involving local groups in defining problems and developing solutions may prove to be one of the major achievements of the project. As well the aim of developing new networks of people and building on existing resources so that they could be shared more widely and imaginatively seems to have been achieved.

SECTION II.

ORGANISATION AND CONTROL

When the Schools Commission allocated funds to Victoria to conduct a Country Education Project, the Minister for Education approved the formation of an intersystemic committee with the following composition:

Government Schools	5 Divisional Directors 1 Regional Director
Non Government Schools	4 Catholic System Representatives 1 Independent Schools Representative
Others	1 Parent Representative 1 Representative from tertiary institutions with an established interest in country education.

The first task of this Committee was to recommend terms of reference for the development of the Country Education Project. The final recommendations of terms of reference were drawn up in relation to:[1]

(a) criteria for the selection of areas

(b) criteria for funding of areas

(c) suggestions for program activities

(d) evaluation procedures

To a large degree the outcomes of this work are contained in the Proposal and Evaluation Guidelines (Appendix A.) However the section on the Selection of Areas (part a) is dealt with in Section IV of this report.

To organise and control the project a structure was established. This structure is illustrated in Fig.I.

REFERENCES

1. Working Party Report on Terms of Reference, held at La Trobe University on 4th April, 1977.

STRUCTURE		FUNCTION
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		1. Responsible for approval of identified isolated areas.
STATE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		1. Responsible for the expenditure of funds and development of the project. 2. Advise the Federal Minister as to the development of the project and the annual expenditure of funds.
DIRECTOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION	DIRECTOR GENERAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT of VICTORIA	1. Keep the Minister briefed on all developments 2. Encourage intersystemic co-operation 3. Advise Planning Committee on the suitability of policy in relation to their education system.
COUNTRY EDUCATION PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE (see attached list of members)		1. Keep Directors of Catholic and State Education systems fully informed of all development in the program. 2. Determine and implement policy relating to the project. 3. Review all programs and make final decisions on funding.
EXECUTIVE OFFICER		1. Aid Project Committees in the development, implementation and evaluation of programs. 2. Keep the Planning Committee fully briefed on all developments in the project.
COUNTRY PROJECT COMMITTEES		1. Survey Needs/Resources of area. 2. Set educational priorities for the area. 3. Facilitate the development of area wide programs. 4. Review and recommend programs to the Planning Committee.
AD HOC AREA SUB COMMITTEES		1. Aid local groups on the development and implementation of program. 2. Be responsible for the development of programs based on specific educational priorities.

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PROJECT STRATEGY

ITS ORIGIN AND AIMS

This report is primarily concerned with the development of the project's philosophy and its implementation. As the implementation of the project is, or should be, a translation of that philosophy, it is essential that the development of that philosophy be carefully outlined in order that the nature of the program be clearly understood and its implementation evaluated. The parameters of the project were determined by the State Grants Act 1977 and Schools Commission guidelines. The State Grants Act stated that the funds had to be used in relation to the education of primary and secondary children in disadvantaged rural areas. The Schools Commission, concerned with the "Equality of Educational Outcomes", [1] requested that the funds be used to conduct a pilot project and not be used merely as a means of overcoming systemic deficiencies. [2] Thus in developing the project the Planning Committee saw itself as not being rigidly bound by past approaches but rather as having an opportunity to find and test new ways of bringing educational experiences to rural areas that would benefit the education of primary and secondary school children. The question for the Planning Committee was how to develop a strategy that would genuinely give the broadest opportunity for fresh approaches to arise and be evaluated, in order that future strategies for rural education could be developed.

At the same time the Planning Committee was conscious that the project was being developed at a time of high employment and economic uncertainty when the nature of work, leisure and retirement was being seriously reviewed. Such questions were very forcefully raised by Professor Dahrendorf in the 1977 Copland Memorial Lectures:-

> "Liberty tomorrow means that we have to rethink the ways in which society offers life chances to people. How can we break the mechanical relationships between education and work, between work and leisure, between work and retirement? How can we interweave more effectively individual pleasure, economic need and social obligation in the lives of our people? How can we give life a new meaning at a time at which so many doubt so much?"

The Schools Commission guidelines for the development of the project were that:-

(a) the project be based on an area or areas.

(b) consideration be given to the nature of the communities and schools in areas under consideration.

(c) all schools (Government and non-Government) be allowed to participate.

(d) the needs of the schools and communities be carefully surveyed.

(e) the respurces, obtained through projects designed to meet local needs, be shared amongst the schools and communities on the area.

(f) there should be continuous evaluation of the project from its beginning.

Whilst these directives to some degree shaped the project, careful attention was given also to information that had arisen from the "Poverty in Education" Enquiry, the development of School Councils, Schools Commission philosophy on parent and community involvement in the education process and "The Family Centre Project" at the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence.
Lastly a fact which had a tremendous impact was the uncertainty of funding. There was a feeling that there might be funding for two years, which raised the question:-

- How effectively could programs be evaluated?
- How could it be ensured that some continuing impact could be left behind after such a short period?

In conforming with Schools Commission guidelines, the first task was the selection of project area. This was done after a thorough review of all rural schools and communities which took into account factors relating to relative isolation from secondary and tertiary education facilities, size, social and ethnic composition, economic problems peculiar to the rural community and the locational arrangement of towns, schools and communities.[4]

Whilst these apparently accepted yardsticks of disadvantage were used for the purpose of area selection, it would be fair to say that they were never completely accepted as providing an accurate picture of disadvantage nor a framework on which to build a philosophy.

For example, isolation was presented as a distance factor, but what were the real causes. Was it finance, psychological or a mixture? If it was psychological then the distance may not be as important.[5] A consequence of distance isolation was that specialist services and activities provided by departments, the Arts Council and Council for Adult Education were rarely seen. But was that situation merely a result of funds petering out before the end of the line or because these groups lacked the political sophistication to bring about a different distribution of resources?

The Planning Committee recommended five areas, all of which were different in terms of ethnic composition, rural indistries and problems and the distance between and locational arrangement of centres. (a brief description of each area is given in Section IV) This decision seemed to contradict the Schools Commission's desire for the application of massive funding to a single area. The question here was, given the uncertainty of funding and the economic future, could massive funding be guaranteed to other areas if an answer to rural disadvantage were obtained? Also was massive funding necessary?

The Australian Assistance Plan and Supplementary Grants Program had shown that the application of a small sum of money could create great enthusiasm and interest. It was felt also that this broader approach would provide a more comprehensive feedback on the question of education disadvantage and its possible solution.

The fact that each area was different, raised the question as to whether each area should be treated differently. It was proposed that a series of approaches be developed ranging from total freedom to a centrally imposed and controlled project. This proposal was finally rejected because, as the nature of the area was not uniform, the feedback would not provide an accurate guide as to which approach was best.

Thus it was decided to develop a uniform approach, but as the Schools Priority Index information was under question, a different concept of the areas was needed so that a program philosophy could be developed. A further review of the areas led to the generalisation that the areas lacked: [6]

(a) a knowledge of and access to decision making (a political process)

(b) an access to information
- vocational
- recreational/cultural
- welfare

(c) an access to resources

(d) an access to a wider set of experiences and relationships.

If these factors were to be confronted and overcome it was necessary to consider a program that could develop competent, confident individuals and that meant more than a school based program. In addition it meant local people had to be involved in defining their problems and proposing solutions. Thus the decision was made, it was to be a community based program.

At a policy level this raised the question of how such a concept met the States Grant Act and Schools Commission guidelines. At a philosophic level it raised the questions:-

- What is a Community?
- How do you place a project in a Community?
- What are the implications of such a decision?

Before considering these central questions it is worth elaborating on the reasons for deciding to place the project in the community. The decision was based on Education Department and Schools Commission policy, the Poverty Enquiry into Poverty and Education in Australia, current approaches in social welfare as evidenced by the Family Care Project at the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence, the Community Child Care Project, the Malvern Learning Exchange and the nature of education in rural areas.

The Education Department through the Education (School Councils) Act 1975 had clearly given the community a definite role in the education process. Whilst councils are in their infancy, it is reasonable to expect that the evolution of their role will see an increase, not a decrease in their activities. Added to this, some Secondary School Review Boards enquire into how the local community views the local High School. Such a process evidences that the School and Community are interlinked and must take cognizance of each other.

The Schools Commission reports are full of statements concerning the role of parents and community in the education process.[8] In addition their Innovations Program resulted in many community based programs which directly or indirectly affected school children.

The report on Poverty and Education in Australia clearly linked the socioeconomic level of parents to their children's use of school and their eventual outcomes in terms of education results and work.[9]
In addition to these findings, Beare[10] in his paper on "Lay Participation In Education", stated that the previous reports by Crowther and Robbins in the United Kingdom and Coleman in the United Sates also showed the link between socio-economic background and the educational outcomes of children. In the same paper Beare pointed out that research by Schiff in 1963, Coleman 1966 and Jablonsky in 1968 showed that when parents participated in school affairs then -

(a) school attendance improved

(b) children study better

(c) children acquire basic skills more quickly

On top of this evidence was the feeling that at the heart of disadvantage was the issue of the "self-image" of the individual involved, and that these educational issues were not being catered for amongst the disadvantaged rural groups. Such positions have been forceably stated by Edgar[11] -

> "thus I argue that both actual competence and the competent self-image lie at the heart of educational (dis) advantage"

and Wright and Headlam[12]

> ".....we believe that the central aim of all education should be provide experiences which enhance, enlarge and enrich the self; that is, whole person development through education".
>
> "While recognizing that all educational programs probably contain assumptions (stated or unstated) that they aim to provide experiences which enhance, enlarge and enrich personal development the evidence we have presented suggests failure to do so, failure on a scale sufficient to warrant special, carefully evaluated, experimental, pilot "booster" programs and projects".

Given this information and the fact that this was a pilot project looking for "new ways" the Planning Committee felt that it would have been neglegent in its duty if it had merely gone for a school based, school directed project. The above provides a justification, but the Family Centre Project of the Brotherhood of St. Lawrence provides an excellent example of a total approach to a social welfare problem. Their program involved about 60 "multi-deficit" and "multi-problem" families and aimed at trying to break the vicious cycle of poverty that these families had been in for generations.[13]

The following are examples of how this problem was tackled:

1. Income Supplement to provide a guaranteed living income.
2. Bulk buying to reduce costs.
3. Assurance of adequate housing.
4. Holidays, and camps for children and parents.
5. Education, recreational and vocational training for adults and children through volunteer teachers.

Thus the evidance arising from the success of this program supported the idea that as well as directly educating children it was desirable to involve and educate parents and community people and in doing so you could affect the educational outcome for children. As such the Country Education Project fitted within the Schools Commission guidelines and States Grants Act. In making such a decision it must be stressed that the Planning Committee did not consider it was becoming involved in a very broad based social welfare program nor did it consider funds would be allocated to activities unrelated to the education of primary and secondary students, it was merely noting that these factors should be integrated whilst the project operated within the broad parameters previously mentioned, and this returns us to the question previously raised about community.

For the purpose of this project the Planning Committee kept its focus on the school and the themes of the project - sharing, co-operation. With this in mind the Planning Committee took one view that a community was a group or groups of people who had the potential and desire to interact [14] and as the program dealt with isolated rural areas the school was seen as the potential focal point.[15] To identify such potential interaction the Planning Committee took into account such factors as where people shop, obtain medical treatment, send children to school, socialise, play sport and go to church.

The above concentrated on existing communities with cohesive forces at work. But as the project would involve large geographic areas, with differing locational arrangements of towns and schools, it was necessary to consider whether interaction could be created in groups lacking cohesive forces. This brought to attention Wabers' concept that community interaction, not necessarily harmonious, resulted from competition over scarce resources and as funds would be allocated to an area such a concept could be tested.[16]

A number of provisions were made to ensure that the program was effectively placed in the community. First, the community was given fifty percent representation on the area committee. However Planning Committee members had no real confidence that this alone would secure the general community a voice. It was anticipated that the more articulate teachers would dominate.

The second strategy was to make personal contact with as great a number of interest groups in the area as possible. To achieve this a comprehensive list of government agencies, service clubs, volunteer organisations and businessmen was drawn up for each area. Following the initial contact it was hoped that these groups would contact other groups of people within the area. Through this process there would be a deepening of contact in the community.

To make this process more effective, media coverage was to be more co-ordinated to ensure as wide as possible a coverage and to ensure a more permanent presence it was seen as desirable to rent a shop front to release information and receive local opinions.

Whilst the above secured a measure of awareness, the real issue was involvement - involvement in the community development sense of allowing local people to define their problems and prepare solutions. The strategy for this process in the Victorian Program was a Needs and Resources Survey to be conducted by local people. The aim of the survey was firstly to ascertain a comprehensive needs pattern for the area, which would include educational as well as other needs such as welfare and agricultural. Secondly the Resources Survey would reveal a reservoir of physical and human resources which could be strengthened and utilised in the development and running of future education programs. In addition the survey was seen as an educative process which would make the general community more familiar with the community and its needs.

Thus through the process of "awareness" and "involvement" the project would not only be lodged in the community but would maximise the development and use of local talent and result in a more effective and lasting use of Project funds. The issue of involvement also highlighted the project theme of "competence". From the outset the Planning Committee rejected the label "disadvantaged" and wished to concentrate on the use and development of the conpetencies of local people. Only through the process of <u>involvement</u> could that concept be applied. The implications of the above process were enormous and had to be carefully thought through if the projects integrity was to remain intact.

It was obvious that:

(a) many ideas would arise that were beyond the scope of the project

(b) many ideas would arise that were of poor educational value but mattered deeply to the local community.

(c) conflict could arise between school authorities and community groups.

Concerning the issues that were beyond the scope of the project, it was planned that they should be diverted to the relevant agency and if no local agency existed then it was hoped the people would be advised of the nearest contact. In order to allow this to happen it was vital that the various agencies or departments were fully briefed on the nature and possible out comes of the project.

It was considered that the Needs and Resources Survey would also provide the various agencies and local interest groups with

- information that they did not possess
- information that could be used to plan for the future
- information that politicians, department officers, service clubs and community group members could use to direct their future activities.

Concerning the last two issues, there could be no hard and fast rule, but in principle there was a feeling that there should be support for community initiatives. The issue that again arose here was the need for good communication with the various department and community personnel. Thus in essence it was seen that this program provided a unique opportunity to -

(a) adopt a broad approach to the question of educational disadvantage

(b) to search for NEW WAYS of overcoming problems

(c) to help local people go through the processing of their problems and possible solution by providing -

  (i) resources
  (ii) information
  (iii) experience and contact
  (iv) access to the decision making process.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. States Grants (Schools Assistance) Act 1977 No 157 of 1977, Section 26, p. 27.

2. This guideline was accepted by the Planning Committee but it considers that whenever extra resources are given to a school or group of schools it is impossible not to effect systemic deficiencies.

3. DAHRENDORF, R., 1977 — Professor Ralf Dahrendorf in Australia, Copland Memorial Address, 1977.

4. Section IV deals woth "The Designated Areas" and covers description and selection.

5. Groups in one area which were only 10 to 15 kilometres apart and had excellent road linkages, were as adament as groups in areas facing distances of 100 kilometres, that interacting and sharing with each was impossible. As one cannot equate the distances it is reasonable to assume that psychological violation is just as big a deterrent as distance. In fact it may be worth postulating that the closer proximity of groups may set up stronger barriers to co-operation than a distance of 100 kilometres.

6. It is perfectly true that such a generalisation could be applied to an urban as well as a rural situation, which leads many to say that there is no difference; apply the same remedy. But the process must be to find what is unique about the rural situation, the generalisation is only a means to focusing on the problem. This is an argument out by Edgar (Quality Education in Rural Schools 1978) that the problem of rural education must be considered in the rural context and not by some set of universal 'standards'. Similarly Bessart (Rural Myth and Rural Schooling) argues that rural groups should determine what is unique and important to their way of life and then propose the ways in which they can be maintained.

   In terms of the Country Education Project the involvement of local people (lay and teacher) will better enable the unique features of rural disadvantage to arise.

7. BEARE, Healey — Lay Participation in Education: Paper delivered to - Australian Council of State School Organisations Conference at Surfers Paradise, Qld., October, 1974.

8. EDGAR, Don — The Schools Commission and Rural Disadvantage, LaTrobe Sociology Papers - Paper No.33, December 1975.

9. WRIGHT, Alan & HEADLAM, Freya — Youth Needs and Public Policies, March 1976. Report prepared for Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation.

10. Education Gazette, 11-2-1976, pp. 67, 68

11. Schools Commission Report: Rolling Trienium 1977-79 p. 13, Section 2.23, 24, 25.

12. FITZGERALD, R.T. 1976 — Poverty and Education in Australia, December, 1976 P. 81 - 83

13. BENN, C. 1972 — The Family Centre Project, First Progress Report.

14. BALL, Colin & Mog — Education for a Change, 1973 - p. 58

15. It is worth noting that the Buchan Community in Far East Gippsland has taken a different view of the school as this project has been implemented.

16. THOMPSON, Faith 1971 — Suburban Living and the Concept of Community, A.N.Z. Journal of Sociology, 1971, Vol. 7 (October): 23 & 27.

SECTION IV.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT

The implementation of the project involved the selection of areas and then the involvement of local communities.

a) The Designated Areas:

(i) Selection

The locating of possible project areas was handled by a working party which consisted of:

Government: Dr. R. Chapman, Planning Services
Mr. D. Weir, R.D. Horsham

Non-Government: Mr. T. Kendell, C.E.O. Bendigo

Other: Dr. D. Edgar, Chairman Planning Committee
Mr. K. Egan, Executive Officer

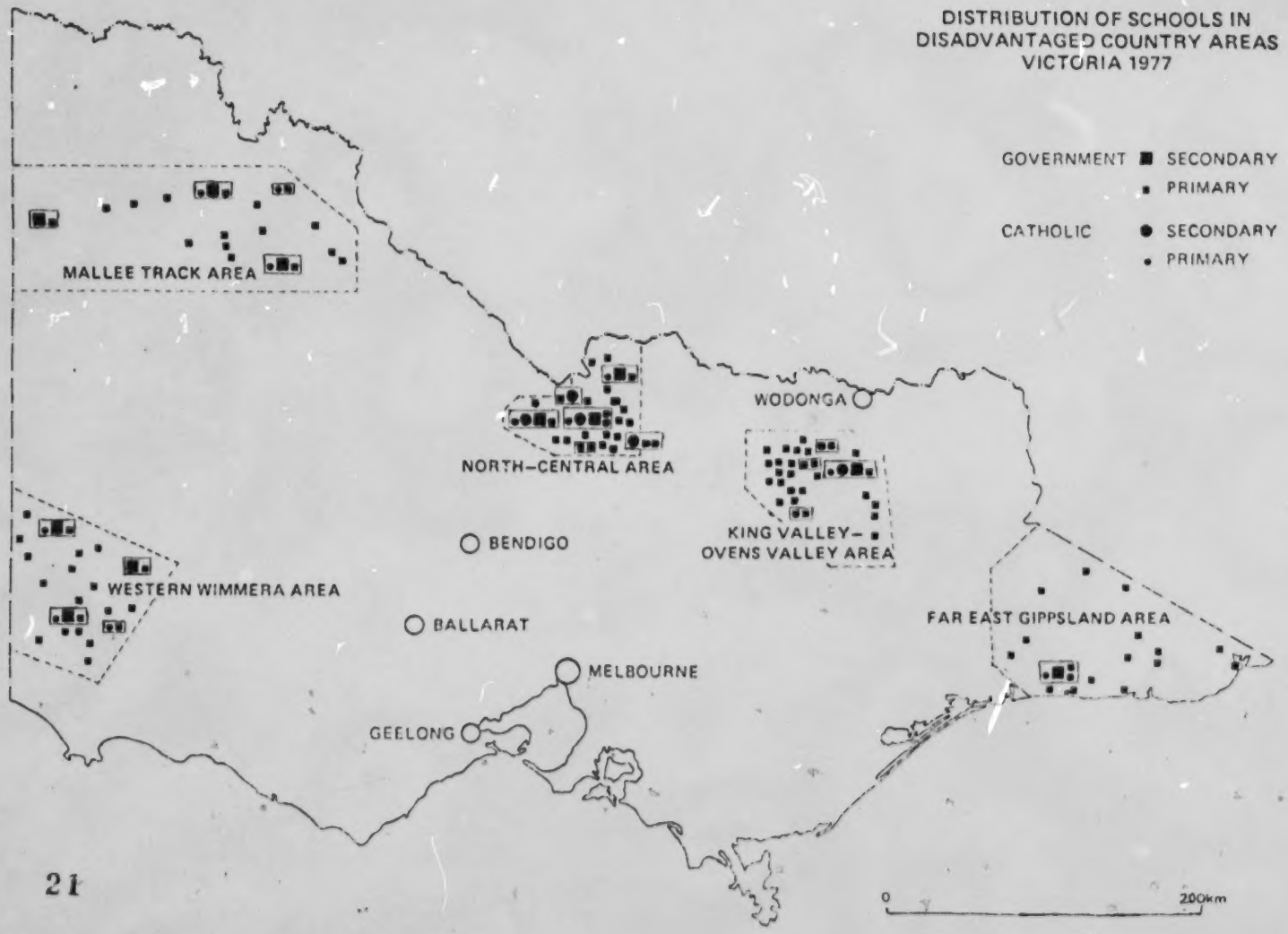
In selecting possible areas the working party kept clearly in mind the following criteria, which had been suggested by the School Commission -

1. Primary and Secondary schools from Government and non-Government systems.
2. Isolation
   - which causes busing of students
   - from cultural and special educational facilities.
   - caused by physical geographic features
3. Varied ethnic and/or socio-economic backgrounds of the community.
4. The availability of linkages between schools and communities to allow interaction and sharing of resources.

At the same time the working party was very conscious that as this was a pilot project, searching for new ways of bringing educational experiences to rural schools and communities, there was a need to select a variety of geographic areas in order to adequately test the above criteria and be able to develop future strategies. Initially the working party plotted groups of schools on a map and then applied the above criteria and the Schools Priority Index to these groups.
Five areas were eventually recommended and approved by the State and Federal Education Ministers. The attached maps show the original boundaries of the areas which were finally reduced in size for administration purposes.

(ii) Description:

The Planning Committee paid great attention to the Schools Commission suggested criteria for selection of project areas, as the following brief description of the five areas shows.


DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS IN
DISADVANTAGED COUNTRY AREAS
VICTORIA 1977
GOVERNMENT SECONDARY
PRIMARY
CATHOLIC SECONDARY
PRIMARY
MALLEE TRACK AREA
NORTH–CENTRAL AREA
WODONGA
KING VALLEY–
OVENS VALLEY AREA
BENDIGO
WESTERN WIMMERA AREA
BALLARAT
FAR EAST GIPPSLAND AREA
MELBOURNE
GEELONG
0
200km

FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

Far East Gippsland is comprised of a narrow coastal plain, fringed by a network of lakes, crossed by a series of rivers and backed by some of the most rugged mountain country in Australia, which is accessable only through narrow, windy mountain roads which occassionally open out into narrow mountain valleys with small rural settlements which are engaged in forestry and pastoral activities. To be kind, communication in such a country is difficult. A main road hugs the narrow coastal plain and at varying intervals narrow, often untarred roads branch off into the narrow valleys of the mountainous hinterland. Thus to travel to different points in the mountain area it is necessary to firstly travel to the main road and then along it to the necessary branch road.
To go to major centres (MOE, SALE, MELBOURNE) involves expensive round trips of 5 to 8 hours. Such a thought is daunting at the best of times but for the people in the mountain valleys it is often dangerous or impossible during winter. Such isolation has its impact on people.
Essentially the area is dominated by forests, which form the basis of the logging and milling industry. In addition there is beef and sheep in the mountain valleys and along the river flats vegetable growing. With the rural recession none of these industries are secure. The vegetable industry is prone to floods and beef and sheep with low prices and plagued by the distance from market, havn't been profitable. The timber mills vary in size and stability and seem prone to rumours of closure or cut back. In addition, the mills do not offer career and job opportunities expected in normal secondary industries, and as such they attract ininerant workers who move from mill to mill around the area.
In contrast Mallacoota is a bright, bustling, growing township based on tourism, fishing and retirement centre. Unfortunately Mallacoota sees its links with Eden in N.S.W. and not F.E.G. and this has presented problems in linking it into area programs.

KING and OVENS VALLEYS

These two large flat valleys are criss crossed by a network of rivers and narrow but adequate roads. The range which divides the valleys is not a barrier to communication or movement.
The major industries of the area are tobacco, dairying, grazing and fruit. The tobacco industry, ehich is well controlled in terms of number of growers and price, has coped very well during the rural recession. The dairying industry is small scale and not as efficient as the irrigated areas. In addition the collapse of overseas markets has made their task ever more difficult. Grazing is carried out in the valleys and hilly country but reductions in the American, Japan and British markets led to an almost total collapse of the market.

Distances between centres are small and the people have ready access to the centres of Wangaratta, Benalla and further afield is Shepparton and Wodonga. The expansion of the Wangaratta Technical College will also provide easier access to tertiary education.

The people deeper in the valleys are more isolated and conservative in contrast to the people in dormitory suburbs of El Dorado near Wangaratta. These people have a different perspective of life and their demands are more middle class and culturally oriented.

In contrast to the other areas this area has a large migrant population comprised of Italians, Spanish and Yugoslav. This has resulted in an intensive survey to ascertain the educational needs of the groups.

NORTH CENTRAL

North Central is a complete contrast to all the areas. It is densely populated, has an excellent network of roads and has easy access to major centres such as Echuca, Shepparton, Bendigo and Melbourne is only 2½ hours away. Despite this the people see themselves as isolated from each other and major centres, which raises the question of psychological isolation versus distance.

The main agricultural activities of the area are dairying, mixed farming and fruit growing. The dairying industry which produces processed products (cheese, butter, powdered milk) has faced depressed prices for the last few years as a result of the collapse of the International market and the protectionist measures of the European Common Market.

In the future the economic position of the dairying industry is expected to improve because the overseas stocks of skimmed milk are being depleted and the Dairy Industry Authority has resulted in improved incomes for dairymen through a better sharing of the market.

In the fruit orchard industry prices have been extremely depressed for a number of years. This has been due to over production and the loss of the British market when she joined the Common Market. On top of this costs for labour and fertiliser have increased rapidly.

Attempts to improve the situation are being made through the 'TREEPULL' Program. The aim of this was to reduce production by paying growers to grub out their trees. To date this has reduced production by about one quarter, but it is estimated that production needs to be cut by about one half.

To process the fruit there are four major canneries in the area. It is estimated that two is enough, thus there will probably be a forced rationalisation on this side of the inductry. The interesting question is whether the Co-Op Canneries (S.P.C. and Ardmona) or the private company ones will win out.

The dryland areas with mixed farming of cereals, sunflower, sheep and cattle have been hit by two major droughts and floods within the last five years and this has naturally affected their income levels.

The major threat of soil salinity hangs over the whole region. To date it has affected the roots of trees but should the water table rise to the level of the roots of pasture crops, the area would be doomed.

The solution is to sink wells to pump out the saline water to the Mallee where it can be safely evaporated. It cannot be pumped into the Murray because of downstream problems. The cost is estimated at $30 - $40 million, but the alternative is unthinkable.

MALLEE TRACK

The Mallee Track is by far the largest and most sparsley populated of the five areas. (1.5 - 2 people/sq. kilo.) The population centres are arranged along long narrow road/rail corridors. From these corridors secondary roads branch off to the agricultural properties of the area. Thus movement always demands moving to the main corridor first.

The major agricultural activities of the area are cereals and sheep and these border the narrow communication corridors. The inductry is very dependent upon rainfall and as you move away from these narrow corridors of development you gradually move into desert conditions.

Due to cost increases and uncertain prices farms are becoming more mechanised and larger. This again contributed to population decline and greater isolation. This process also increases the movement to towns of young couples, retired people and people looking for work and this in turn places pressures on towns.

WESTERN WIMMERA

The undulating green pastures of this area sharply contrast with the flat dry openess of the Central Wimmera and the Mallee. This is one of the top grazing areas of Victoria with sheep being dominant over beef and to a lesser degree dairy cattle.

Properties are much smaller that one would expect with sixty percent being under 800 acres. But costs of labour, fertiliser and shearers has increased dramatically in recent years, and this along with poor prices for beef and lambs has led to a decrease in rural holdings of 5% over the last ten years and in concert with this farm employees have dropped by half over the same period. This naturally affects the population and activities of towns with disused buildings being common scene. It also creates pockets of poverty with one high school having indigent population of over 10%.

Communications are good and there is easy access to major towns such as Mt. Gambier, Horsham and Hamilton. But in essence the people see themselves as isolated from each other and Melbourne.

(iii) The Schools

Total Number of Schools and Students Polupalion in Project.

School	Total No. 1 and 2 Teacher Schools.	Other	Total No. of Schools.	Total Student Population.
State Primary	68	35	103	7,711
State Secondary			12	4,037
Registered			18	3,239
TOTAL	68	35	133	15,087

B. Breakdown of School No's and Student Populations per Area.

I. MALLEE TRACK

	No. of 1 & 2 Teacher Schools.	Other	Total No.	Population	Total Population all Schools.
a) State Primary Schools	6	7	13	977	
b) State Secondary	-	-	3	714	
c) Registered Schools	-	-	3	246	1937

II. WESTERN WIMMERA

a) State Primary Schools	14	5	19	1231	
b) State Secondary	-	-	3	925	
c) Registered Schools	-	-	3	636	2892

III. NORTH CENTRAL

a) State Primary Schools	14	11	25	3067	
b) State Secondary	-	-	4	1652	
c) Registered Schools	-	-	9	1457	6176

IV. OVENS & KING

a) State Primary Schools	22	7	29	1550	
b) State Secondary	-	-	1	312	
c) Registered Schools	-	-	2	765	2627

V. FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

a) State Primary Schools	12	5	17	886	
b) State Secondary	-	-	1	434	
c) Registered Schools	-	-	1	135	1455

FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
4909	Bemm River	via Orbost, 3889	58 4227	Mr. J. Shere	8	1
1166	Bendoc	via Orbost, 3888	88 9454	Mr. L. Mayer	14	1
1905	Buchan	Buchan, 3885	55 9241	Mr. C. Roberts	63	3
3256	Buchan South	Buchan South, 3885	23	Mr. P. Owen	18	2
3812	Cabbage Tree	via Orbost, 3889	58 1221	Mr. P. May	17	1
3920	Cann River	Tamboon Road, Cann River, 3889	45	Mr. P. Cottam	87	12
3343	Club Terrace	School Road, Club Terrace, 3889	58 3237	Mr. M. Titman	31	2
3691	Combienbar	via Orbost, 3889	7	Mr. F. Thexton	19	2
3153	Gelantipy	via Buchan, 3885	55 0291	Mrs. J. Sykes	9	1
3112	Genoa	Princes Highway, Genoa, 3889	58 8235	Miss S. Aitken	12	1
3515	Mallacoota	C/- Post Office, Mallacoota, 3889	58 9121	Mr. I. Cook	102	13
3433	Marlo	via Orbost, 3888	54 8236	Mr. J. Fuhrman	38	2
2930	Newmerella	via Bairnsdale, 3875	54 1620	Mr. K. Kellow	42	2
3372	Noorinbee	via Orbost, 3889	58 7121	Mrs. B. Humphreys	12	1
2744	Orbost	Ruskin Street, Orbost, 3888	54 1119	Mr. K. Lamb	239	13
4767	Orbost North	Rupert Street, Orbost, 3888	54 1217	Mr. R. Sutton	155	11
4593	Tubbut	via Orbost, 3888	88 0261	Mrs. H. Browse	20	1
State Secondary Schools						
8215	Orbost High	Arnold Street, Orbost, 3888	54 1084	Mr. Keith Knight	434	43
Registered Schools						
1177	St. Joseph's School	Raymond Street, Orbost, 3888	54 1110	Sr. Margaret Barry	135	5

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
3325	Bobonwarrah East	via Wangaratta, 3678	27 3282	Ms. J. Moorhouse	15	1
776	Bright H.E.S.	Park Street, Bright, 3741	55 1166	Mr. G. Elliott	305	20'
4192	Byrne	via Wangaratta, 3678	27 9220	Mrs. M. Walker	20	2
2553	Cheshunt	via Wangaratta, 3678	29 8373	Mrs. M. Timmers	30	2
3076	Cheshunt Sth.	via Wangaratta, 3678	29 8384	Mrs. C. Harden	36	3
1422	Edi Upper	R.S.D., via Wangaratta, 3678	29 3560	Mr. D. O'Flaherty	41	2
2031	Everton	Ovens Hwy., Everton, 3746	27 0222	Mr. R. Dawson	44	2
1198	Everton Upper	R.S.D., via Eldorado, 3746	27 0283	Mrs. J. Booth	18	1
1742	Glenrowan	Glenrowan, 3675	66 2221	Mr. Mel Gay	48	2
1385	Greta	R.S.D. via Glenrowan, 3675	27 6263	Ms. H. Lightfoot	11	1
2452	Greta South	via Glenrowan, 3675	66 6344	Mr. Mike Lee	26	2
2573	Greta West	via Glenrowan, 3675	27 6245	Mr. Frank Ryan	11	1
1584	Hansonville	via Glenrowan, 3675	27 6362	Mr. Terry Kirby	19	2
843	Harrietville	via Bright, 3741	59 2533	Mr. D. Cummins	13	1
2894	King Valley	via Wangaratta, 3678	29 3526	Mr. John Bianco	25	2
1221	Markwood	via Wangaratta, 3678	27 0353	Mr. Frank Seal	72	4
737	Milawa	via Wangaratta, 3678	27 3243	Mr. Pater Amor	41	2
1335	Moyhu	Moyhu, 3732	27 9298	Ms. K. Draper	91	3
2171	Mudgegonga	via Myrtleford, 3737	53 4525	Mr/ Davif Hills	20	2
2677	Myrrhee	via Moyhu, 3732	29 7524	Mr. Peter Cooke	34	2
6241	Myrtleford Cons.	Box 276, Myrtleford, 3737	52 1174	Mr. Ian Hughes	351	17
1399	Oxley	Whitfield Road, Wangaratta, 3678	27 3312	Mrs. Liz Gay	42	2
1144	Porpunkah	Porepubkah, 3740	56 2253	Mr. L. Perryman	81	3

State Primary Schools Continued:

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
1116	Tarrawingee	R.S.D. via Eldorado, 3746	25 1629	Mr. A. Parker	32	2
273	Wandiligong	Wandiligong, 3744	55 1026	Mrs. M. Hughes	21	2
2441	Whitfield	Whitfield, 3733	29 8286	Mrs. K. Dobson	35	3
1373	Whorouly	Whorouly, 3735	27 1363	Mr. A. Clark	42	2
2478	Whorouly East	Whorouly East, 3735	27 1311	Mr. J. Gargan	16	2
4208	Whorouly South	Whorouly South, 3735	27 1340	Mrs. C. Monster	10	1
State Secondary Schools						
8120	Myrtleford High	Mummery Road, Myrtleford, 3737	52 1011	Mr. B. Souter	312	34
Registered Schools						
1694	Marian College	Prince Street, Myrtleford, 3737	52 1596	Sr. Isla	319	13
1188	Sr. Mary's School	O'Donnell Avenue, Myrtleford, 3737	52 1808	Sr. Marie Therese	446	18

NORTH CENTRAL AREA

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No. of Teachers
3732	Ballendella	via Rochester, 3561	86 5482	Mr. Peter Wright	39	2
3260	Barmah	via Picola, 3639	69 3284	Mr. G. Higham	14	1
1680	Byrneside	Byrneside, 3617	55 2432	Ms. J. Greendlade	20	1
2034	Carag Carag	via Stanhope, 3623	81	Mrs. A. Hawking	13	1
1021	Corop	via Elmore, 3559	84 8244	Mr. T. Devlin	12	1
3093	Coomboona	via Mooroopna, 3629			11	1
2275	Gillieston	R.S.D. Tatura, 3616	26 0346	Mr. P. Darby	10	1
3971	Girgarre	Girgarre, 3624	75	Mr. B. Lohrey	169	8
1732	Girgarre East	W.R.S. Delivery, Tatura, 3616	54 8341	Mr. Mick Italia	45	2
1458	Harston	via Tatura, 3616	54 8317	Mr. I. Glenister	28	3
1999	Kotupna	via Nathalia, 3638	67 3227	Mr. Brian Williams	22	1
2902	Kyabram	Haslem Street, Kyabram, 3620	52 1247	Mr. D. Spowart	369	16
4866	Kyabram	Dawes Road, Kyabram, 3620	52 1660	Mr. R. Slone	349	13
2823	Kyvalley	voa Tongala, 3621	52 1923	Mr. P. Rowe	58	2
1814	Lancaster	via Kyabram, 3620	55 2560	Mr. K. Barton	93	4
1874	Merrigum	Judd Avenue, Merrigum, 3618	55 2275	Mr. Bill Stewart	117	7
2002	Mooroopna North West	via Tatura, 3616			33	
2060	Nathalia	Bromley Street, Nathalia, 3638	66 2677	Mr. Burnie Tobin	220	10
1989	Picola	Picola, 3639	51	Mrs. G. Holymen	10	1
795	Rochester	Edwards Street, Rochester, 3561	72	Mr. C. Buzza	368	13
1057	Rushwirth Primary	Old Tatura Road, Rushworth, 3612		Mr. Alan Mackinder	124	
3937	Stanhope	Savige Road, Stanhope, 3623	114	Mr. Tom Burgess	159	7
4325	Stanhope South	via Stanhope, 3623	4	Mrs. C. Wilson	13	1
1555	St. Germains	R.S.D. Lancaster, 3620	26 0341	Mr. Tony Anderson	25	2

NORTH CENTRAL AREA

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
3732	Ballendella	via Rochester, 3561	86 5482	Mr. Peter Wright	39	2
3260	Barmah	via Picola, 3639	69 3284	Mr. G. Higham	14	1
1680	Byrneside	Byrneside, 3617	55 2432	Ms. J. Greendlade	20	1
2034	Carag Carag	via Stanhope, 3623	81	Mrs. A. Hawking	13	1
1021	Corop	via Elmore, 3559	84 8244	Mr. T. Devlin	12	1
3093	Coomboona	via Mooroopna, 3629			11	1
2275	Gillieston	R.S.D. Tatura, 3616	26 0346	Mr. P. Darby	10	1
3971	Girgarre	Girgarre, 3624	75	Mr. B. Lohrey	169	8
1732	Girgarre East	W.R.S. Delivery, Tatura, 3616	54 8341	Mr. Mick Italia	45	2
1458	Harston	via Tatura, 3616	54 8317	Mr. I. Glenister	28	3
1999	Kotupna	via Nathalia, 3638	67 3227	Mr. Brian Williams	22	1
2902	Kyabram	Haslem Street, Kyabram, 3620	52 1247	Mr. D. Spowart	369	16
4866	Kyabram	Dawes Road, Kyabram, 3620	52 1660	Mr. R. Slone	349	13
2823	Kyvalley	voa Tongala, 3621	52 1923	Mr. P. Rowe	58	2
1814	Lancaster	via Kyabram, 3620	55 2560	Mr. K. Barton	93	4
1874	Merrigum	Judd Avenue, Merrigum, 3618	55 2275	Mr. Bill Stewart	117	7
2002	Mooroopna North West	via Tatura, 3616			33	
2060	Nathalia	Bromley Street, Nathalia, 3638	66 2677	Mr. Burnie Tobin	220	10
1989	Picola	Picola, 3639	51	Mrs. G. Holymen	10	1
795	Rochester	Edwards Street, Rochester, 3561	72	Mr. C. Buzza	368	13
1057	Rushwirth Primary	Old Tatura Road, Rushworth, 3612		Mr. Alan Mackinder	124	
3937	Stanhope	Savige Road, Stanhope, 3623	114	Mr. Tom Burgess	159	7
4325	Stanhope South	via Stanhope, 3623	4	Mrs. C. Wilson	13	1
1555	St. Germains	R.S.D. Lancaster, 3620	26 0341	Mr. Tony Anderson	25	2

State Primary Schools Continued:

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
1441	Tatura	Service Street, Tatura, 3616	24 1684	Mr. B. Oster	323	16
1674	Tatura East	E.R.S. Tatura, 3616	24 1670	Mr. Bill Grimme	63	2
6255	Tongala Consoladated	Miller Street, Tongala, 3621	351	Mr. J. Andrew	331	17
2198	Yalca South	via Nathalia, 3638			29	
State Secondary Schools						
7965	Kyabram High	Haslem Street, Kyabram, 3620	52 1711	Mr. Wal Kuhne	793	63
8140	Nathalia High	Pierce Street, Nathalia, 3638	66 2331	Mr. K. Ellis	210	22
8280	Rochester High	Edward Street, Rochester, 3561	173	Mr. G. Sayers	395	36
8295	Rushworth High	Heily Street, Rushworth,3612		Mr. Ernest Jones	254	
Registered Schools						
1731	St. Augustines College	Church Street, Kyabram, 3620	52 1080	P. Wilson	140	6
646	St. Augustines School	" " "	52 1492	Sr. Julia Thomas	282	11
1605	St. Mary of Angels Primary School	Robertson Street, Nathalia, 3638	66 2501	Sr. Ancille	130	5
	" " " College	"			177	7
603	Sacred Heart College	Campaspe Street, Rochester, 3561	15	Sr. Brenda Lynch	123	11
1708	St. Josephs School	Campaspe Sreeet, Rochester, 3561	632	Sr. Veronica	165	6
324	Sacred Heart School	Hogan Street, Tatura, 3616	24 1841	Sr. Kathleen Dillon	210	8
1594	St. Patricks School	Mangan Street, Tongala, 3621	171	Sr. Marlene Monoghan	90	4
	St. Mary's	Rushworth			140	7

WESTERN DISTRICT

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No Of Teachers
1208	Apsley	Apsley, 3319	31	Frank De Maria	48	2
1586	Bahgallah	via Casterton, 3312	81 1925	Denis Klason	7	1
6205	Balmoral Cons.	Stirling Street, Balmoral, 3407	47	Mr. Bruce Arblaster	256	13
2058	Casterton	McPherson Street, Casterton, 3311	81 1522	Bill Louch	311	14
2738	Chetwynd	Chetwynd, 3312	83 1522	Mr. Tony Logan	12	1
2118	Coleraine	Church Street, Coleraine, 3315	75 2057	Mr. Noel Raggatt	158	7
1543	Coonewirricoo	Roadside Mail, via Harrow, 3317	83 1559	Mr. Geoff Semmers	10	1
1729	Dergholm	via Casterton, 3312	83 3225	Mr. Steve Whitehead	8	1
2047	Digby	Digby, 3309	79 3236	Mrs. A. Enscoe	8	1
6219	Edenhope Cons.	P.O. Box 96, Edenhope, 3318	66	Mr. H. Hackwill	181	10
2049	Harrow	Harrow, 3317	40	Mrs. Sue Peters	21	1
2633	Langkoop	via Casterton, 3312	86 4232	Mr. Steve Baulch	11	1
4415	Melville Forest	via Coleraine, 3315	75 8223	Mrs. J. Milne	8	1
6237	Merino Cons.	Annersley Street, Merino, 3310	79 1305	Mr. B. Schwartz	109	8
2303	Mareen	via Coleraine, 3315	79 8525	Angela Pugh	6	1
2978	Poolaijelo	via Casterton, 3312	86 7534	Mrs. Carmal Ryan	12	1
1654	Sandford	via Casterton, 3312	81 1961	Mr. John Allman	11	1
2883	Strathdownie	Roadside Delivery, Casterton, 3312	84 7230	Mrs. H. McIntyre	23	1
3397	Wando Vale	Private Bag 13, Casterton, 3311	82 0207	Mr. Greg Pugh	31	2
State Secondary Schools						
7547	Balmoral High	Stirling Street, Balmoral, 3407	115	Mr. Graeme Hayter	150	15
7695	Casterton High	Mt. Gambier Road, Casterton, 3312	81 1588	Mr. Ray Watson	508	44
7800	Edenhope High	Lake Street, Edenhope, 3318	53	Mr. R. Rowe	267	25

MALLEE TRACK AREA

State Primary Schools

School Number	School Name	Address	'phone	Principal	Enrolment	No of Teachers
3800	Boinka	Boinka, 3506	95 6243	Mrs. Wendy Stone	11	1
6235	Manangatang Cons.	Manangatang, 3546	35 1270	Mr. M. Sweeney	116	18
4000	Mittyack	via Sea Lake, 3533	93 1222	Ms. L. Shields	7	1
6239	Murrayville Cons.	Poole Street, Murrayville, 3512	95 2110	Mr. Ken Wright	110	3
3927	Nandalay	Nandalay, 3533	78 1219	Mr. M. O'Connor	21	1
3615	Ouyen	Hunt Street, Ouyen, 3490	92 1161	Mr. Joe Gibson	211	13
3973	Patchewollock	Algerian Street, Patchewollock, 3477	14	Mr. Ian McDonald	67	3
3273	Sea Lake	P.O. Box 60, Sea Lake, 3533	165	Mr. D. Ellemor	181	10
3861	Speed	Main Street, Speed, 3488	33	Mr. T. Anderson	27	1
3654	Tempy	Tempy, 3489	93 6245	Mr. Ron Payne	28	2
3426	Ultima	Ultima, 3544	39 6314	Mr. L. Coldwell	82	3
3819	Underbool	Underbool, 3509	94 6342	Mr. T. Babitsch	69	3
3747	Walpeup	Walpeup, 3507	94 1280	Mr. Dennid Winbanks	47	2

State Secondary Schools

8112	Murrayville High	Box 116, Murrayville, 3512	95 2001	Mr. Frank Peck	93	17
8220	Ouyen High	Filler Street, Ouyen, 3490	92 1182	Mr. Ekin Smyth	298	34
8310	Sea Lake High	Box 10m Sea Lake, 3533	249	Mr. Mike Nihill	323	28

Registered Schools

1630	St. Patrick's	Wharton Street, Manangatang, 3546	35 1384	Sr. J. Dalgleish	57	4
1514	St. Joseph's	94 Oke Street, Ouyen, 3490	92 1053	Sr. Judith	110	4
1578	St. Mary's	Hannon Street, Sea Lake, 3533	16	Sr. E. Kirby	79	3

b) Implementation through Community Involvement:

The Country Education Project rests upon -

(i) involving local people

(ii) using and developing local resources, both human and physical

(iii) sharing resources between all schools and communities in the area.

The reasons why local people should be involved have been carefully outlined in Section III. This section covers the planned and the actual process of how people were to be involved and the project implemented.

To ensure as wide a community involvement as possible, a comprehensive list of all interest groups in each area was drawn up, including Department Representatives, Schools, Councils, Service Clubs, Youth Groups, Farmer Unions, Businessmen and Churches. The plan was to hold meetings with each of these groups, carefully outline the project and ask these groups to spread, by word of mouth, the information they had obtained and at the same time provide the names of other community contacts. This process would result in a gradual working back into the community. [1]

To facilitate these meetings an interim co-ordinator, who had a sound knowledge of the area and the people, was to be appointed. Such a person would not only set up the meetings but would also continue the flow of information. Co-ordinated with these moves into the area would be links with local newspapers, radio and T.V. to ensure that local groups would be made as aware as possible of all developments.

Following these meetings there would be a public meeting to elect a project committee for the area. This Project Committee would then be provided with $5,000 to carry out the Needs/Resources Survey, the process and procedures for which would have been outlined during the initial stage of contact.

In the end none of the carefully planned procedures was put into effect because of -

(i) the time needed to plan the project and then obtain approval from the State and Federal Ministers for Education.

(ii) the Planning Committee's later decision that a full-time co-ordinator for each area was two expensive. 2

Given the lack of time and back up staff, the Executive Officer was forced to drop the original plan and request Regional Officers attached to the designated areas to arrange public meetings at each of the main centres, through the School Principals and District Inspectors, to be followed by a large area-wide meeting at a major town. The rush also meant that Principals and District Inspectors were not briefed on the nature of the project and thus were in no

position to advise and prepare the local community. Thus when the Executive Officer arrived the community was almost totally in the dark.

Despite the poor publicity and lack or warning, the attendance at meetings was remarkable. On an average fifty to sixty people attended each local meeting, representing a broad cross section of interest groups in the community. Lists of names were collected for future contact.

It had been anticipated that the basis of all meetings would be a discussion of the "Proposal and Evaluation Guidelines". Unfortunately the printing of these had been delayed which meant there was no reference material to leave behind after a meeting.

A similar process was followed in all meetings, with the Executive Officer giving a short talk (10 - 15 minutes) outlining -[3]

(i) who funded the project

(ii) who controlled the project

(iii) the nature of the project

- (a) based on an area
- (b) all schools to participate
- (c) sharing of resources
- (d) area wide projects

(iv) the processes in developing programs

- (a) election of area committee
- (b) needs/resources survey
- (c) setting of priorities based on survey
- (d) development of programs based on priorities
- (e) evaluation of program

The talk was always followed by a long question/answer session revolving around:

(a) Who makes up the Planning Committee?

(b) How were the areas selected, who will determine the shape and size of Area Committees?

(c) Will committee size be based on population? [4]

(d) Who will determine funding - area committee or Planning Committee?

(e) How much money has been allocated in Victoria?

(f) How much money will each area get?

(g) If a program is based on an expressed need, will it be automatically funded?

(h) Will there be funding next year? [5]

(i) Could funds be used for capital works?

Following the public meetings in small towns within each area a final public meeting was arranged to elect an Area Committee. These Area Committee election meetings were usually a couple of days after the smaller meetings but in the case of North Central there was almost a month delay because of school holidays.

All these meetings resulted in a common process. From the very outset all small communities were convinced that they would be swamped up by the main centres, and thus, their needs and concerns would not be adequately heard. Their representative therefore attended with one thought in mind - at all costs they must protect their own interests. In each meeting the initial move was for representation to be based on a proportional representation linked to the school or the general population.[6] Such proposals were always rejected by smaller isolated centres, and this started the process of finding an equitable distribution of representation through sub-groupings within the area. After long discussions there emerged a general agreement as to which were the major sub-groupings within the area and this was then followed by an agreement that each of these sub-areas should have equal representation. (see attached lists of Committees).

On this basis, the meetings finally agreed that there would be a set number in the committee and that each sub-area would elect its own representatives. In some cases those elections were carried out at the public meeting but, in others, people returned to their sub-areas and conducted elections and then these delegates came to the first meeting of the Area Committee. Thus from the outset a parochial nature was built into the organisation and running of the program. Yet there seems little doubt that without that type of formation it would have been extremely difficult to get the project off the ground.

The first and most crucial task for each Committee was to conduct the Needs and Resources Survey. It was crucial as it would -

(a) make the whole community more aware of the project and hopefully result in greater local involvement.

(b) bring about a greater insight into local problems and awareness of local resources which could be utilised in developing and running future programs.

(c) form the basis for a list of educational priorities for the area which in turn was the key to area wide programs[7]

(d) develop the network of information, people and resources which could be used in proposed and future programs.

Despite the crucial nature of thus survey, the preparation of material and aid given the areas was very poor and the blame for this must rest squarely with the Planning Committee. Again the reason was the lack of time and staff to carry out the task. One Executive Officer alone had to handle the five areas in the State.

Despite these deficiencies of time and personnel, all areas except one, put a great deal of effort into the survey and obtained a great amount of information and knowledge about their area. All areas were given a paper outlining possible approached to the survey. Examples of this are included in Appendix B, but the most common were -

(a) Distribution of Needs/Resources cards with advertisements in local papers explaining how to fill them in.

(b) A booklet with general headings for Needs and Resources was widely distributed and people asked to fill in details.

(c) Organising groups of people to move around the area and interview people about their needs.

The initial evaluation of the Project conducted by Monash University revealed the following information about the survey -

(a) it was generally seen as very beneficial in that it did

(i) reveal hidden resources within the community

(ii) help people learn things about their community which surprised them 8

(iii) create a greater awareness and get people discussing their needs

(iv) develop potential networks of people

(v) reveal an enormous variety of needs.

The issues that arose from conducting the survey were -

(a) the card system created problems in that it

(i) relied on people to return them

(ii) the terms such as "vocations", "access" and "media" acted as a "put down" to the unsophisticated.

(b) the process created expectations which could not be met and consequently led to dissapointment and frustration with the program.

(c) the use of the term "NEED" led people to think of things they needed and the expectation that these things would be funded.

One area overcame this problem by substituting the word "problem" which gave a more comprehensive picture of regional needs.

(d) the most successful surveys were done in the small isolated areas where there was more face to face contact.

(e) there was a feeling among some teachers that lay people did not know their needs particularly in the area of education and that identification of needs should be left to teachers. Other local people retirted that in terms of area needs their knowledge was absolutely vital.

(f) there was a feeling that it would be worthwhile updating the survey and utilising the information for the development and running of program.

The aim in implementing the project has always been to leave the options open as far as possible for the Area Committees. To this end the guidelines were kept as general as possible and the Executive Officer was directed not to supply answers but to encourage locals to propose them. Through this process it was felt that a variety of approaches to problems would come up and local groups would feel they had solved the problem, thus resulting in a quicker and more convincing transfer of responsibility to the Area.

Unfortunately the rather sudden and drastic changes in the method of implementing the program has consequences for functioning of all groups linked to the project. But given the problems created by time delay and back-up staff, and the cartain knowledge that the nature of the

project could not be explained in the time available, the Planning Committee faced the dilemma of placing more central control on the project or sticking with the original plan. In the end it was decided to stick with the original plan to keep faith with the aim of community development.

The fact that many local groups and institutions were not contacted meant the Project and the Committees might be robbed of their resources and linkages in the build up of networks. Furthermore, their apparent exclusion at the outset could create problems for later integration as evidenced by the following letter from a local Government Council.

> Dear Sir,
>
> It is said "don't look a gift horse in the mouth" however in respect to the recent announcement of the subsidy for the.....of the State under the Country Education Programme, my Council felt that some emphasis should be placed on several disturbing aspects surrounding the Scheme. In the first instance, Council found it difficult to understand the haste to commit the funds, which in reality, may mean simply an endeavour to implement projects without adequate knowledge and collation of data both available and to be researched. The "day of commitment" must hang heavily over the heads of the Committees entrusted to carry out the programme and because of the area involved the range of suggested projects may be many and varied, consequently unanamity hard to achieve in the short time left to the Committee to "come up with" projects for educational/community benefit.
> Apart from the time element, I was further directed to express dissapointment that at no stage was my Council really aware of the availability of the funds and its purpose. With the emphasis placed on "community" it was considered no-one was better qualified to take a leading role in implementing any programme however knowledge of the whole matter was limited to notices of "Public Meetings" and some general publicity in the local press. Local Government involved in schemes as envisaged by your Department, in this particular inctance, is considered essential and the lack of advice and details were naturally of concern to those Councillors not directly involved with school activities or recipients of school notices etc., consequently unaware that they could have contributed and participated at the Meetings whereat the planning committee was elected and programs formulated.
>
> I regret the necessity of having to bring this matter to your attention, however several of my Councillors were very disturbed over the manner in which the whole subject was handled and considered their discontent should be made known and this concern was shared by Council as a whole.
>
> Your comments would be appreciated,

A central feature of the Project was the involvement of community groups and individuals. The fact that the Project was eventually introduced through the school system, but that the community involvement aspect was stressed, let to a great deal of anger and misunderstanding.

Some Principals openly rejected the concept and considered it a violation of the Schools Commission directives on the project. The opinion of community groups ranged from seeing it as only a community project to one of an equal sharing of funds, this originating from the fifty percent community representation of Area Committees. In cases where community people stressed their role, teachers withdrew in the belief that it was a community education project. This led to the skills of teachers being untapped in developing and implementing programs. The fact that the larger centres were chosen for the initial meeting seemed to give them some legitimacy as focal points for sub-areas. This was despite the clear directive that sub-areas committees should not be formed as they would help to reduce area co-operation rather than strengthen it. Thus from the start sub-area mentalities arose and it is reasonable to assume that this helped the development of early parochial programs.

For the Area Committees the problems were considerable. They were under extreme time pressure to commit funds, they had been inadequately briefed as to the nature of the project and how to develop programs. In addition forces were already at work which ran counter to the basic guidelines, namely parochialism and animosity between school and community.

From the outset the Committees worked with a deal of energy and enthusiasm, involving long meetings which regularly ran into the early hours of the morning. Whilst results were being achieved this seemed acceptable but as the Planning Committee placed increasing emphasis on adherence to the Prohect's Guidelines, the long hours appeared less fruitful and this at times led to frustration and resignations in a number of cases.

Two comments are worth noting about the function of Area Committees and they are in relation to meeting procedures and adherence to the Guidelines. There seems little doubt that the most efficient committees, in terms of time and output, were chaired by experienced hard-headed professionals, usually Headmasters. In these cases there was good co-operation between chairperson, the co-ordinator and secretary. In addition they devoted responsibility to working parties or other groups. The less experienced committees tended to retain responsibility within the committee and showed a lack of co-operation between the different groups and personalities within the committee.

This desire to keep all control within the area committee seemed to be motivated by a desire to keep a constant check on each other. In terms of adherence to guidelines the Committees had a poor record. Many reasons can be offered for this -

(a) the pressure of time to commit funds

(b) the parochial forces at work in committees

(c) the lack of staff to aid and advise area committees

(d) the disbelief that sharing across the areas was a feasible proposition.

(e) the unwillingness to accept the nature of a pilot project

(f) the obvious failure to carefully read the guidelines

(g) the uncertainty of future funding

(h) the failure to set and distribute priority list of education needs to submit on any isolated need.

Given the above points it was predictable that programs may not meet the Guidelines and it was through this process that consequences of the rushed implementation came home to roost for the Planning Committee. They had the task of attenpting to steer programs towards meeting the demand of the guidelines while at the same time preventing any loss of momentum and enthusiasm that had been building up in the area. It would be easy to argue that this was a nest of their own making, the the Planning Committee too were concious of the limits of time and staff, and the need to retain momentum, but at the same time to stick with and test the ideals of the project. No easy road to steer.

REFERENCES

1. There had been a great deal of discussion about "grass roots" involvement, but given the time and staff available it would have been naive to expect that level of involvement could be achieved. Thus it was decided to take a gradual approach to involving the community.

2. Minutes of Planning Committee Meeting No. 8 held at Catholic Education Office on 21st July, 1977, pp 6 & 7.

3. The Executive Officer has constantly argued that given the limited time it was impossible to explain or hope to immediately achieve the original aims. Instead he kept to a brief outline of the project which would allow Committees to begin operating and thus get some momentum into the project. He always argued that despite the difficulties he believed the local communities would "deliver the goods".

4. From the outset the smaller centres were convinced that the large centres would dominate the Committees and their needs would never be considered.

5. The fact that no definite answer could be given to this question greatly determined area attitudes to program development, which was to get as much as possible, as quickly as possible and not to plan for the future.

6. A variation on the approach was that representation be based on community groups such as service clubs, schools, scouts, kindergartens etc. This was rejected by the smaller centres on the grounds that the larger centres contained more of these organisations and as such would dominate the Committee.

7. A priority was seen to be a need that the whole area agreed upon and as such all groups would submit on a common need which would facilitate the development of area programs. Unfortunately Area Committees never clearly stated their priorities ans as such a seried of parochial submissions were developed.

8. Some groups were surprised when they discivered particularly needy groups in the community. In two cases the people concerned took action to secure home help through local Council for old age pensioners.

9. This problem was compounded when two members of the Planning Committee who disagreed with projects philosophy deliberately led the areas to believe that the philosophy of community involvement was contrary to Schools Commission directives ans as such projects which were outside the school would not be funded.

SECTION V - THE FUNDED PROGRAMS

a) Introduction

The whole purpose of this pilot project was to search for and evaluate new ways of providing educational experiences to isolated rural schools and communities. To a large degree that search has been carried out by local communities and the culmination of that search is expressed in the programs which they developed and were funded by the Planning Committee. But before considering those programs it is worthwhile reviewing:

(a) the criteria set down by the Planning Committee for Program Development

(b) the framework by which the Planning Committee viewed the nature and needs of the area.

(c) the process used for reviewing submissions (programs)

The Planning Committee requested that all programs be:

(a) based on an educational priority which had arisen from the Needs Survey.

(b) have an area wide application

(c) use and develop local resources

(d) share local and project resources

(e) be intersystemic

(f) search for new ways of overcoming problems, particularly through the development of information and human networks.

Essentially program development focused around the satisfaction of a single surveyed need. On the other hand the Planning Committee reviewed the needs of the areas in terms of power over resources, information, relationships and decision making, which was multi-purposed in its outlook and hit at the issue of competence.

The important issue here was whether allowing a group to concentrate on a single Need would give rise to programs that attacked a variety of needs. For example a Tennis Clinic was seen by areas as learning tennis, whereas the Planning Committee saw it as access to resources (money and special skills), new and wider relationships and experiences which could be utilised in the future and decision making as local talent could be developed for future use in locally planned and run clinics. Thus is appeared that the "Needs" approach could result in a multi purpose attack.

Concerning the development of programs the Planning Committee has always hoped that the Executive Officer would not only aid Area Committees but would also review programs before they were forwarded to the Planning Committee. This process proved impossible due to lack of time and staff and as a result areas were to a large degree left to themselves to develop programs [1] and as a result programs often did not conform to guidelines.

All area committees were requested to forward programs to Planning Committee members two weeks before a hearing date. This would allow time to check out uncertainties with a result that the Planning Committee could provide a leadership role at the hearing. Unfortunately due to lack of time the program usually arrived a couple of days before a hearing. Thus the Planning Committee was in a position of reviewing submissions they had just read, that hadn't been reviewed by the Executive Officer and probably wouldn't conform to the guidelines. At the same time they would have to give a decision which would ensure that public funds were being spent responsibly, programs were steered towards the guidelines and local enthusiasm was maintained.

In this situation the Planning Committee was forced to pick out select items in programs and rely on the advice of local co-ordinators to outline and clarify issues that arose. [2] When doubts arose it was forced to resort to conditional approval or referring the program back to area committees with a series of questions and suggestions. As the Executive Officer was unable to cope with these demands across five areas it often led to misunderstanding and anger in cases where the area committee was aware that it has considered many of the questions referred back to them but hadn't indicated this in the proposal. This anger was often intensified when one area committee felt it was being treated differently from another. [3]

Despite this all funds were comitted by the end of 1977 and one can only give great praise to the dedication of area committees and the Planning Committee which met weekly in the latter months of 1977 to consider the programs. The following table provides a brief review of funded programs and concentrates on the need that was satisfied in terms of Area Committee and Planning Committee criteria. Whilst the table does not indicate it, it is fair to say that most of the early programs did not meet the criteria of being area wide; they were passed on the condition and in the belief that they had the potential to develop along those lines. Future reports will concentrate on that development, their evaluation and the impact the evaluation had on the program.

b) Programme Review (see following tables)

AREA: FAR EAST GIPPSLAND

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	INVOLVEMENT	OBJECTIVES	PLANNING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Train Tour $6,500	Run by Education Department for Year 6 students, Funds a subsidy for needy students.	School based.	Provides wider experience for students who would otherwise miss out.	Wider experiences Relationships	
Audio Visual Equipment for School Bus $3,100 +	Equipment set up in bus by AVEC for use by students who spend up to 2 hours each way on the bus. Recreational and educational materials used.	School based.	Will test impact on students, reduce boredom, poor academic records.	Information Resources	
Rural Field Day Extension $8,600	Brings students and teachers together on a regular basis. Parents encouraged to attend.	School based.	Provides opportunity for greater social interaction, development of awareness and confidence, and professional development of teachers.	Information Resources Wider experiences Decision making	
Art/Craft Manual Arts $44,300	Two Sections - a) Mobile Van - staffed by artisan/driver who conducts classes at schools during the day, and in communities at night. Carries pool of equipment for art/craft, woodwork. b) Equipment - moved around area in response to demand, instructors from C.A.E. or the community.	School/community based.	Provides curriculum options otherwise available on a limited basis or not at all.	Resources Wider experiences	

Outdoor Education $26,000	Equipment obtained through innovations grant. Funding ensures isolated areas benefit. Graduated program through on-school camps to camps out of the area. Parents involved.	School based.	Students develop confidence, sense of co-operation etc.	Wider experiences Resources Relationships
Excursions $4,000	Concentrates on small rural schools.	School based.		Wider experiences
Mobility $10,000	See statement on Ovens/King Valley	School based.		Wider experiences. Decision making.

AREA: OVENS & KING

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	INVOLVEMENT	OBJECTIVES	PLANNING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Ethnic Survey $17,500	An extensive survey aimed at a) developing programs based on needs uncovered in the survey b) creating greater interaction between Australian and Ethnic communities.	School/community based.	See description	Information	To be extended with the appointment of an ethnic projects development officer.
Recreation Hut $8,800	Built at a school camp. Provides all weather recreation area.	School based.	Provides facility for completing wide range of programs.	Resources	
Community Drama Group $5,000	Formed with the aid of the Drama Resource Centre in Melbourne. Productions planned.	Community based.	Provides focal point for development of drama resources existing in area.	Information Resources Wider Experiences Relationships	To be extended by bringing groups into the area to provide impetus.
Tennis Coaching $4,400	Throughout area. Involves children and adults. Adults to run program in future.	School/community based.	Provides growth in sport that has important social implications.	Special Services	
Transport/ Mobility $15,000	Funds controlled by a local committee.	School/community based.	Provides transport for groups/schools in order to bring people together for greater interaction and to produce more confident and competent children.	Relationships Wider experiences	
Excursions $5,000	Involved small isolated schools in end of year excursions.	School based.	As above.	As above.	

Swimming Pools $50,100	3 learner pools built around the area to provide a focus for program.	School/community based.	Provides facility in which learn-to-swim programs can be conducted.	Resources

AREA: NORTH CENTRAL

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	INVOLVEMENT	OBJECTIVES	PLANNING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Community Education Project $6,500	Conducted through Tongala Community Centre. Broad program providing- -Parent Effectiveness training -Adult Literacy/Numeracy Art/Craft -Listening/Comprehension	Mainly community based.	Provides a variety of people develpt. classes.	Special services Resources Wider relationships New information	Has provided impetus to an ever-developing community centre.
Work Experience $8,600	Conducted at Ibis Milk Products. Provides experience in a range of employment fields. Film produced for general use. Provision for primary school visits.	School/community based.	Provides country children and adults with greater insight into industry, and associated types of employment.	Wider experiences Special Services Information Resources	Has provided a vehicle for the development of better work experience programs for local schools.
Intellectually/ Physically Handicapped Support Scheme $3,500	Run in conjunction with Echuca SEU. Equipment programs, and lessons provided for selected students to operate in normal classroom structure. Parental co-operation encouraged.	School based.	Provides specialist services to children who would otherwise be neglected.	Special services Resources Relationships	Has been extended in 1978.
Basic Numeracy/ Literacy Program $5,000	Designed by Monash Uni. Educationists. Courses for children, adults, unemployed youth.	School/community based.	Provides specialist services in a range of groups.	Special services Resources Relationships Information	Has been extended in 1978.
Sport Program $1,500	Athletics equipment and training	School based.	Provides athletics training to children.	Resources Relationships Information	

Excursions $3,000	For small rural schools.	School based.	Provides for growth of existing careers and drama programs.	Wider experiences Relationships Resources	
Careers and Drama $8,700	Provided AV equipment for careers and drama programs.	School based.	Provide for growth of existing careers and drama programs.	Wider experiences Relationships Resources	
Maths Mini Computer $2,200	Shared by 5 High Schools in the area. Previously access to this facility very limited.	School based.	Provides for expansion of computer options in secondary schools. Career options widened.	Resources Wider experiences Information Decision Making	
Music $20,000	Provides instrumental instruction to all schools in the area. Local people with expertise engaged as tutors. Equipment is shared. Transported by various existing means.	School based.	Provides music education to students througout area.	Special services Wider experiences Resources	To be expanded for next year
Swimming - Adults $400	Adult Learn-to swim classes for shy adults.	Community based.	Provides confidence boosting swimming training.	Special services	Highly successful. To be refunded
Physical Education Program $1,400	Provides basic physical education equipment to small isolated school at Girgarre.	School based.	Provides curriculum option otherwise unavailable to the school.	Resources Wider Experiences	

Community Education (Nathalia sub-area) $9,610	Broad education program for the Nathalia area involving schools and community groups. Incorporated - tennis coaching, athletics coaching, spinning/ weaving, first aid, water safety, restoration of traditional crafts.	School and community based.	Provides educational experiences for a variety of fields.	Resources Special services Wider experiences Information Relationships
Community Education (Kyabram & Tatura sub-areas) $18,000	Provides - audio/visual art/craft sport camping equipment for use by school and community groups. Movement facilitated by a trailer towed by mobile library.	School and community based.	Provides impetus for a wide range of programs to develop.	Resources
Tongala Community Centre $14,000	Provides equipment (art/craft, sport/ recreational) for this developing community centre. Money also provided for renovations to set up.	Community based.	Provides focus for development of many programs.	Resources Accesss to - Information Relationships, Wider experiences

AREA: MALLEE TRACK

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	INVOLVEMENT	OBJECTIVES	PLANNING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Community Awareness Program $16,400	Aimed at creating an awareness of the CEP in Mallee Track area. Program included – - Clinics in tennis & swimming - Music - Excursions - Remedial Ed. - Technical Ed.	School/Community based.	Whilst this was not a program, it proved to be an excellent way of introducing the CEP and creating awareness in the community.	Whilst this was not a program it provided – - Special Services - Information - Wider experiences - New Resources	The music, remedial education and technical education is being extended in 1978.
Transport $40,000	Three mini-buses	School/Community based.	To provide schools/ community with a means of obtaining ed./recreat./ social act.	Access to - Resources - Wider Experiences Could provide means to - Special Services - Information	Provision has been made for the training of drivers (school/community) at the Driver Training Complex in Shepparton.
Developmental Drama Program $11,100	Local drama teacher runs drama work/ shops for community/ Teachers/students.	School/Community based.	Provide an appreciation of drama in life and education. Improve communication between different groups. Develop confidence in self expression.	Access to - Special Services - Wider Experiences - Relationships	The overall aim is to develop an integrated Drama/Craft/Cultural Program. It is anticipated a co-ordinator to develop and run this program. It is also anticipated that a community theatre will be developed.
Human Relations Program $2,000	Designed and conducted by groups from Melb. Includes - Sex education for school students/parents - parent effectiveness training courses - discussion groups.	School/Community based.	To improve insights into approaches to child rearing. Improve relationships between teacher/parents/students.	- Special Services - Information - Relationships - Wider experiences	The audio-visual program is being used to record and spread programs across the area.

Communications Program $52,200	Provide recording and replay video equipment in schools throughout the Area. The equipment will be available to school and community groups. Inservice course will be organised for community groups.	School/Community based.	Provide 1.general and special ed. material to schools. 2.cultural/rec./ general etc. programs to school/community. 3.record programs funded under CEP.	- Resources - Information - Wider Experiences - Special Services
Excursions $7,700	Provided funds for an extensive excursion program because of long delay in delivery of buses.	School		

AREA: WESTERN WIMMERA

PROJECT	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	INVOLVEMENT	OBJECTIVES	PLANNING COMMITTEE CRITERIA	COMMENTS
Music $10,000	Provides instrumental music program to children in isolated primary schools. Carried out through the employment of three local music teachers.	School based.	Provides instrumental music education.	- Wider experiences - Special services	Has proved highly successful. Has been extended in 1978.
Technical & Life Long Education $40,000	Broad program providing -Technical Ed. exper. -Art/Craft education Conducted by local -teachers -tradesmen/artisans -instructors from Glenormiston Agric. College.	School/ Community based.	Provides tech. ed. experiences to children and adults. -Engine maintenance -Welding -Farm Management -Art/Craft course to children/adults.	- Wider experiences - Special services - Resources - Decision Making - Relationships	Fund provided to area to be administered by Local Committee of Management made up of community and school personnel. As this has provided local people with greater freedom of choice it has been viewed as a major initiative in CEP.
Portable Theatre Lighting Equip. $2,000	Used throughout area by school and community theatre groups.	School/Community based.	Provides school/ community theatre groups to put on more professional performances. Encourages theatre in the area.	- Wider experiences - Special services - Resources - Relationships	Has proved highly successful. Has been extended in 1978.
Special Education Unit $33,500	Specially equipped caravan. Provides lessons & programs for children with special learning difficulties. - information to teachers - transports educ. equip. around area.	School based.	Provides special services to teachers & children in isolated rural schools.	- Resources - Special services - Information	Appears to have provided a great psychological boost to project and education in the area. Will provide adult programs in the future.

Gymnastics Equipment $4,800	Provides basic gym. equipment for schools in Harrow area. - mats, bars, horses, spring boards.	School/Community based.	Provides Phys. ed. program for in Harrow area.	- Resources - Special Services - Relationships	The equipment is also used by football team and local play groups.
Camping Equipment $28,000	Provides a range of equipment to cater for children from year 1 to year 12.	School based.	Provides wider experiences for all children. Provides environmental studies for senior students.	- Resources - Wider experiences - Relationships	The schools are integrating parents into the camp program now.

c) Conclusions

The programs that have just been reviewed represent the planned expression of the hopes and desires of the thousands of parents, teachers and local groups who have come together to devise new ways of overcoming their perceived needs. Future evaluation will tell how effective they have been, but at this early stage what these programs have meant can only be told through the reactions of those people.

Some general statements made about the project include -

> "The project inself is a wonderful experiment because for the first time a Government Department (the Education Department) has agreed to allow substantial funds available to it, to pass into the hands of a group or groups over which it has no control. Whether the Education Department realized what it was doing or now has reservations about the project is another matter."

> "At some stage we really must get down to defining just what "country disadvantage" is and examine the social processes which produce it."

> "It has been a refreshing experience to see Secondary School Principals, Technical School Principals, Municipal Officers and Community Representatives meet regularly to hammer out a program in technical education skills and life long education. Ten years ago the whole notion would have been pushed to one side as impossible."

> ".....the rural teachers have expressed the greatest enthusiasm, as have their pupils and parents. They see the C.E.P. now as a means to breaking down the isolation of themselves and their pupils, as adding interesting new programs to the routine day, as a way of getting specialists into their schools."

> "Lastly I would make this point. Though most of us can ill afford the time and the demands made on our personal resources it has been exciting and profitable to work with others in the community. It is my opinion that children in our schools are benefitting already."

> "For myself I welcome the chance to share in the educational field, I am facinated to see what ideas are produced and how they work out in practice, and dismayed to think that so much organisation and planning, so much effort may well be neglected completely at the end of three years."

REACTIONS TO FUNDED PROGRAMS:

1. Drama

Parent - In this isolated rural community children suffer social disadvantages imposed upon them by the very geography of the place. The Developmental Drama helps them to harness their egos and become more aware of other people and their needs - hence equipping them for the hostile world they must soon face.

Ex-Teacher - I am most irate that this wonderful program is available to us all amd most of my fellow teachers have turned their backs on it.

Primary Teacher - I feel this Developmental Drama course conducted by Nancy Cato to be invaluable to all individuals in the teaching profession, or in a position in which they find themselves responsible for a number of children, be it Guides or a child's party. Drama can be incorporated into endless areas of the curriculum and may be employed to facilitate the development of the whole individual.

2. Literacy and Numeracy Program

Mother of 12 year old son - My twelve year old son Francis and I attended the Mathematics class conducted by Miss M. Tobias. I found the week most enjoyable, stimulating and helpful, I now feel much better equipped to help my own children and others if necessary. Francis has always been a poor student, a dreamer, lacking concentration and uninterested in school work, during the last week it was almost like a miracle, his whole approach changed, he became interested and enthusiastic about his work, even the presentation of his work improved 100% it is now neat and orderly, previously it was hardly readable.

Mother of 16 year old son - It is now 4 months later and Donald can read, yes, he still has a long way to go and it will take a long time, but he can read and is improving all the time. This week we received two, two page letters from him, they weren't perfect but told me all his holiday news.

3. Technical and Lifelong Education

Farmer - Very happy about the way course is shaping up. Nothing like it around here before. Usually when away (eg: Glenormiston, Dookie) an exam has to be completed which is of no value to a person on his own land. One tends to work things out with a "farming sense", but with the course it explains why things happen, and so one doesn't have to go by "the seat of his pants" so much.

Housewife - Has wanted to do pottery for ages. Couldn't do so, because no classes handy. Loves every minute of it. Feels everyone should have a go at it. Very important social interaction taking place. In sporting (eg: golf) one only meets same ones each week. In the pottery class, one meets new and different people. Class helps to get shy country people out of their homes. They tend to be insular. Older people come along as their children are no longer a tie for them.

Farmer and Housewife - Social aspect of these classes is very important irrespective of the type of course. If he has to pay a subscription fee os say $20 to go to the course it would be out as travel into Casterton is not cheap.

4. Rural Field Day Extension Program

This program is beginning to show real benefits for the children and the teachers involved. The children who come from small rural isolated schools are now becoming more socially confident and aware as they mix with a wider group pf children. They now know many of the children that they will meet when they go to High School. For the teachers the program is helping to overcome professional isolation, as they meet together to share ideas and plan the programs for the field day. In addition the group is receiving assistance from outside advisors and consultants. Parents and community are becoming more enthusiastic as children and teachers report back through video tapes, news letters and reports.

5. Migrant Education

An intensive survey of ethnic communities in the King and Ovens Valley has resulted in the following recommendations:-

(a) Community Resource Centre which will provide interpreting and translating facilities, education counselling, multi cultural studies and adult education. There should also be a multi lingual directory developed to cover welfare services and community resources.

(b) Community Education Development Officers

(c) Improved communication between parents and schools

(d) Language Programs

(e) An area wide multi-cultural education program involving school and community.

Given that these are early days in the project and the fact that the above comments are by no means comprehensive, it would be impossible to draw any definite conclusions. At the same time it would seem reasonable to say that the following indications are appearing:-

a) Despite the early difficulties the project seems to have taken root in the schools and communities.

b) The involvement of community groups in the education process seems to have been accepted.

c) Communities are becoming rejuvenated as they become involved in:

1. defining their problems and needs
2. interacting with other groups to propose solutions
3. participating in new educational experiences

d) Old networks are being strengthened and new ones established as local groups search for "new ways" of solving problems.

In general the C.E.P. appears to have achieved its initial aim of establishing the project as community based and getting a wide variety of groups and people involved in defining their educational problems and proposing solutions.

SECTION VI

SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The implementation of this project has given rise to a series of issues involving the Schools Commission down to the sub-area committees, which deserve careful consideration.

The Schools Commission and Funding:

While the Schools Commission recommends funding on a three year basis it is bound by a yearly budget and this lack of guarantee had consequences for planning and programs in the C.E.P. -

(a) It is impossible to get people to commit themselves to long term plans unless they are certain that funds will be available to implement the program.

It seems better to go for physical resources which can be used later rather than see a well thought out plan destroyed by a sudden curtailment of funds.

(b) Time is needed to develop and plan a project such as the Victorian C.E.P. and as such it would be better to allow adequate planning time (eg: 1 year) before the project gets to the implementation stage and any major funds have to be spent.

(c) When implementing a program of the nature of the C.E.P. problems are bound to arise and there is ample evidence that the real benefits of a project will not emerge for two years during which there has been ample time to evaluate and 'iron out the wrinkles'. There is thus a need for continuous funding to gain the maximum benefit from the project.

(d) Whilst this has been termed a 'pilot project , the Schools Commission has not set any specific time period. If a specific time were set planners and participators would know how long they have to develop and carefully evaluate their programs.

As funding has been recommended until 1981, that would seem an ideal time to cease the pilot, (five years would have elapsed) with a committment from the Schools Commission that at that point a similar amount of funds would be made available to continue those programs that had proved through careful evaluation that they are overcoming rural educational disadvantage

Planning Committee.

The issues that arise concerning the Planning Committee are -

1. Membership

Invariably the people who compose such committees are heavily committed to many other committees as well as their specific job. This often leads to the necessity for substitute delegates, who, if they are from a lower level in a Department often cannot provide adequate input to discussions on policy issues. Nor will there be adequate feedback of Committee decisions into the Department which might provide the necessary committment for adequate implementation.

2. Participation

As with Area Committees there can be a tendancy to allow two or three people to dominate. Whilst this may allow things to run smoothly it can alienate people, waste talent and possibly absolve people from responsibility for decisions. To overcome the former two points the Planning Committee has set up a number of working parties to cover such areas as policy development, communications, evaluation and systems involvement. Furthermore to ensure more effective participation there should be regular "in-service" sessions on the basic aims of the project. The latter point raises the issue of -

3. Commitment

The fact that two Planning Committee members actively campaigned against policy decisions despite their presence at the discussion stage, not only created problems, but reflects a peculiar understanding of obligations to decided policy.

Administration Funding

Whilst it is desirable that the maximum proportion of funds go to projects, administration is a necessary factor and can be as much for a $500,000 as for a $2,000,000 project. But to under-administer a "pilot" project looking for future answers, is to defeat the purpose and in the end cause misuse of public monies. The cost of adequate administration must be faced up to from the outset.

The original working party that developed the Guidelines foresaw this problem and recommended the appointment of a full-time Executive Officer and five full-time Area Co-ordinators. The Planning Committee however, in an attempt to restrict spending on administration, cut this back to five part-time Co-ordinators, leaving the one full-time Executive Officer with the task of implementing the entire Project in all five areas. This arrangement has clearly not met the basic needs of the project for -

(a) informing Area Committees and groups on policy issues

(b) aiding the development of programs which meet the guidelines

(c) evaluating programs and collecting data which can be used to develop those future strategies.

(d) identifying outside resources which could be used in the development, implementation and continuation of programs.

(e) keeping the Planning Committee fully informed so that they can develop adequate policy guidelines.

To achieve this end it would seem sensible now to estbalish a central group which could act as a team or in an individual capacity to perform the above-mentioned function. The Planning Committee has now accepted this rationale and has expanded the Shepparton support team to include the Executive Officer, a full-time Research Assistant and a full-time Field Officer.

Systems Commitment

From the outset the Planning Committee was asked to use C.E.P. funds to overcome 'system deficiencies'. Whilst the Committee has abided by this request, it has consistently argued that the moment it provides funds it is interfering with systemic deficiencies and this issue must be faced.

Surely if a project if set up, after consultation between State and Federal Governments, which aims to look for ways of overcoming the problems of rural education 'at a reasonable cost', then there should be a comitment from the start to evaluate why such problems arise within the system in the first place and find ways in which the pilot programs developed can be continued within the systems once specially designated funds terminate.
There is no point in kidding ourselves: this program will raise expectations which will lead to political pressures. The issue should be faced now and the possibilities considered.

Another feature of systemic committment has been the non-involvement of District Inspectors. Whatever the reason, such a situation should not be allowed to continue as their knowledge and involvement is desirable and necessary. The mentality of people whose task it is to oversee all educational developments in their area but who see C.E.P. programs as being in opposition to their ongoing school curriculum is difficult to understand, especially when such C.E.P. initiatives have the support of teachers and community.

Selection of Areas

The designated areas are extremely large and were deliberately made so in order to fully test the concept of community and to see whether interaction could be strengthened and even created.
Even though the areas are large and do cut across existing community linkages, new interactions have been created and schools and community groups now have a greater understanding of the needs of others within their area.
Whilst this argues well for the theory of community put forward, the question is, will the new links stand the test of time or will traditional linkages take over when and if the funds finish?
Theoretically if resources are still available the peripheral groups would remain to get their share. But is that the best way to handle it?
If new areas are to be opened should not different types of groupings and arrangements be considered which would be viable in the long term as well as beneficial to that community? The C.E.P. seems to rest more and more upon the development of networks and not identification of disadvantage through an Index figure. Its solutions lie more with people in communication sharing resources than in money being spent on 'things'.
Recent work by O'Connor and Moran on school consolidation has indicated that whilst consolidation was cost effective in terms of buses and schools it was detrimental to the educational outcomes of the bused students. Their contention is that any consolidation should be on a much smaller scale with a series of smaller consolidations. Certainly the experiences of the Planning Committee in their visits to areas has been that at all costs communities want schools to remain as they are often the last focal point left.

Whilst the C.E.P. may not get involved in consolidation it could test a series of small intensive group day programs with a larger focal centre which could boosted as a major resource centre.

Another minor point on the selection of areas is that if areas conform to local Government Council boundaries then a great deal of information can easily be obtained.

In short, the C.E.P. has perhaps made the same mistake demonstrated in other State divisions. Education Department Regions cut across Primary District Inspectorates; State Government provinces cut across Local Government Areas; our C.E.P. areas cut across all of these. Perhaps we should now look at dividing country areas of the State into C.E.P. areas which coincide with but are smaller than existing boundaries so that key resources such as Regional Offices, Local Councils, large towns etc. are included. We have shown that C.E.P. methods <u>can</u> break down parochial boundaries and develop a wider awareness of area problems, needs and resources. It would be more efficient and economical to move in this direction rather than merely to designate further 'area pockets' of rural educational disadvantage.

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